

UCLA Faculty Association

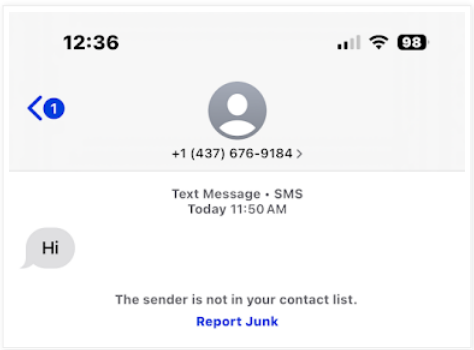
News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

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Sunday, October 12, 2025

Hi



Bye

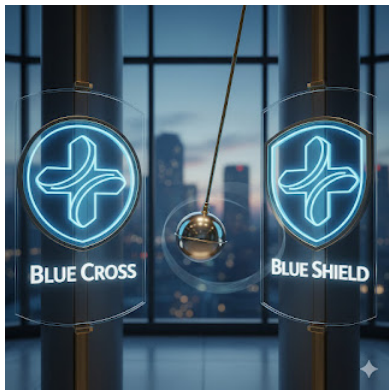
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Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:10 AM](#) No comments:

Labels: [email fraud](#)

Saturday, October 11, 2025

Back and Forth



Back in 2013, UC switched its administrator for its PPO plans from Blue Cross to Blue Shield, effective in 2014. In 2016, UC decided to switch back, effective in 2017. (I had a dim memory of this back-and-forth selection and used Google to find old documents that indicated the dates.)

I mention this history of oscillation because it appears that for active employees, UC has decided to switch again to Blue Shield, effective 2026. Retirees not eligible for Medicare would also switch.

Apparently, retirees under Medicare will continue with Anthem as the plan administrator.

It might be noted that UC is self-insured for these various plans. However, the administrator brings with it its network, etc. From the patient viewpoint, it is not supposed to matter who is paying the claims, an insurance company or the employer.

There are other changes coming to be announced before open enrollment. One that isn't is that Delta Dental will continue to be the dental care insurer. Alternative suppliers of insurance had narrower in-network lists than Delta.

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- [Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix](#)
- [Judge rules Trump demands of UCLA must be made public](#)
- [Faculty are fighting back](#)
- [Faculty Lawsuit Demands Public Access to Trump Administration's Settlement Demands on University of California](#)
- [Coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the UC and the California economy](#)

Remaking the University

- [Liner Note 40. AI's Two Pathways: 2025 Has Discredited Booster Assumptions of 2024 - 10/11/2025](#)
- [Liner Note 39. Attack Theory for Education - 9/28/2025](#)
- [Liner Note 38. The University of California's Charlie Kirk Tribute Act - 9/16/2025](#)

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BOLDLY CALIFORNIAN

2025 OPEN ENROLLMENT: PROTECTING UC'S BENEFITS

BACKGROUND

Open Enrollment begins Oct. 30, and we know that rising medical costs are a concern for many of you. Like employers across the country, UC is facing an overall increase of 10.2% in medical premiums — part of what experts say is the steepest jump in more than a decade. We understand how difficult it is to see these costs go up year after year, and that's why we've been working hard to limit the impact on you and your family and safeguard UC's benefits.

FACING FINANCIAL CHALLENGES TOGETHER

UC is facing one of the most serious financial challenges in its 157-year history, but protecting employees from steep health care cost increases remains a top priority. Here's what we're doing to support you:

- ✓ In 2025, UC will invest an additional \$260 million in medical benefits — a 9.5% increase and the largest boost in the past 15 years. This brings our total investment to \$3 billion, covering 82% of medical premium costs while continuing to pay 100% of dental and vision premiums.
- ✓ Our academic health centers are carrying significant financial pressures, with labor costs up 22% in the past year, rising supply costs, and \$5.9 billion in community benefit and uncompensated care to support the health of the communities they serve. Even so, they are absorbing hundreds of millions of dollars in expenses to keep premium costs lower for employees in UC medical plans.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

While these decisions will help keep the average of employee premium increases low, the impact to you will depend on the plan you choose. We'll have full details in the coming weeks. But here are a few changes you should know about now:

NEW PLAN OPTION

HealthSavings+ is replacing CORE and UC Health Savings Plan, with new benefits and costs.

- ✓ HealthSavings+ will be UC's **lowest premium medical plan**, and it includes a Health Savings Account (HSA) that lets you set aside money for health expenses while lowering your taxable income.
- ✓ The HSA is a valuable way to save for qualified medical expenses, and the account stays with you even if you leave UC.
- ✓ To help you get started, UC is increasing the annual HSA contribution from \$500 to \$750 for individuals and from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for families.

Increasing UC's investment

Year	Investment (in millions)
2012	100
2013	110
2014	120
2015	130
2016	140
2017	150
2018	160
2019	170
2020	180
2021	190
2022	200
2023	210
2024	220
2025	230

MORE EQUITY ACROSS PLANS

In the past, UC covered a larger share of the total cost for Kaiser HMO compared to other plans with similar benefits. Beginning next year, UC is balancing premiums across similar health plans.

- ✓ UC will pay roughly the same percentage of total premium costs for Kaiser HMO as they do for UC Blue & Gold HMO.
- ✓ Employee premiums will be more equitable and predictable, and plans with provider choice, including in-network UC Health providers, will be more affordable.
- ✓ Premiums for represented employees will be implemented consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements and the law.

REVIEWING OUR PARTNERSHIPS

The company that administers your health or dental plan does more than just process claims. They share your experience and how easy it is to get help, how wide the provider network is and how smoothly your coverage works day to day.

That's why UC regularly reviews our partners to make sure you're getting good access to care, reliable service and strong value for your premiums. Starting in 2025:

- ✓ **Blue Shield of California** will be the plan administrator for UC Care and HealthSavings+. We have been working with Blue Shield, Accolade and Navitus (who will continue as our partners) for over a year to make this transition as smooth as possible.
- ✓ Anthem Blue Cross will remain the UC High Option Supplement and UC Medicare PPO administrator.
- ✓ Delta Dental will stay in place, after a thorough review found that it has the largest provider network. Instead of changing plan administrators, we're expanding benefits for some out-of-network services so it's easier and more affordable to keep seeing the dentist you prefer.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU CHOOSE

People make decisions in many ways, so we're offering all sorts of resources to help you understand your new options. Here are a few to consider:

- ✓ Visit UCnet, the Open Enrollment website (launching Oct. 27) and visit ucfacultystaffgo to learn all about HealthSavings+ and how it compares to UC's other medical plans.
- ✓ **ALEX** offers a customized comparison of medical plan premiums (including any caps or subsidies that may apply to your bargaining unit contract or location), out-of-pocket costs, and in-network providers. Information for 2025 will be available in ALEX by October 26, 2025.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for your Open Enrollment packet mailed from UC, along with important emails from UCHealth and your medical plan.
- ✓ Check your location's benefits website or visit the Open Enrollment website beginning Oct. 27 for a schedule of webinars, events and information sessions.
- ✓ Represented employees should also consult their collective bargaining agreements and unions regarding how these rates apply to them.

Balancing UC's contributions

Year	UC Blue & Gold UC %	Kaiser Permanente - CA UC %
2012	85	95
2013	85	95
2014	85	95
2015	85	95
2016	85	95
2017	85	95
2018	85	95
2019	85	95
2020	85	95
2021	85	95
2022	85	95
2023	85	95
2024	85	95
2025	85	95

Source: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2026-Benefits-Changes-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

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As an unrelated sidenote, as the image above shows, AI doesn't know that for a pendulum to swing between two points, it presumably would hang from the middle. It doesn't know that Blue Cross and Blue Shield have specific emblems, not those shown. But...

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: [health care](#), [UC](#)

Straws in the Wind - Part 127

From the [Columbia Daily Spectator](#): *Columbia revised several of its undergraduate application supplemental questions for the 2025-26 admissions cycle, according to the Common Application made available in August, removing language about diversity, equity, and inclusion from an existing prompt and adding a new question about learning from disagreement. The changes come amid federal scrutiny of Columbia's undergraduate admissions process following the University's \$221 million July deal with President Donald Trump's administration. The deal prohibits the University from using "personal statements, diversity narratives, or any applicant reference to racial identity as a means to introduce or justify discrimination" in hiring or admissions.*



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During the 2024-25 application cycle, the University asked first-year applicants to Columbia College and the School of Engineering and Applied Science to describe how they would “learn from and contribute to Columbia’s diverse and collaborative community,” according to an old version of the application accessed via the Internet Archive. For applicants to the class of 2030, the question asks about “Columbia’s multidimensional and collaborative environment.”

One sentence from the prompt has been removed entirely: “A hallmark of the Columbia experience is being able to learn and thrive in an equitable and inclusive community with a wide range of perspectives.”

“The University’s application questions are periodically updated to reflect a variety of factors,” a representative for Undergraduate Admissions wrote in a statement to Spectator. “In keeping with our longstanding policy and out of respect for the tens of thousands of students who apply each year and are actively going through the process, we do not discuss specific details of our application procedures. The University has consistently complied with the law and all applicable agreements and will continue to do so.” ...

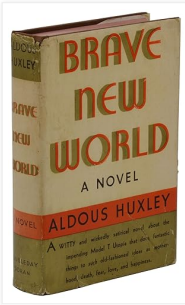
Full story at <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2025/10/03/columbia-revises-application-questions-for-2025-26-admissions-cycle-removes-reference-to-diverse-community/>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments: 

Labels: Barnard, Columbia, diversity, politics

Friday, October 10, 2025

Brave New World



From Forbes: A dirty little secret in higher education is that professors are not trained in how to teach... AI professors, in many ways, will be the best versions of the best professors students can have. AI professors will be realistic avatars that go far beyond the simple tutor model based on large language models, and will likely be here before anyone sees it coming. AI professors will: be available 24 hours, 7 days a week; have an exceedingly large bank of knowledge and experience that they can draw from to illustrate concepts; be complex responders to students’ learning styles and neurodivergence thereby providing truly personalized education with evidenced-based effective pedagogy; have the ability to assess and bring students along on any topic about which students desire to learn, thereby increasing access; teach content areas as well as durable skills such as critical thinking; and have updates in real time that fit the expectations and needs of the current workforce.

A reasonable concern that has been raised is how to prevent AI professors from hallucinating or providing inaccurate information. One mechanism to guard against this is to ensure that the course and teaching that occur are within a closed system of content and have oversight by human professors. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that human professors are not immune to hallucinating or making up answers to questions. They just do it without oversight. Human professors, on the other hand, will be able to serve students in a more personalized and interpersonal manner than is currently available. Instead of one to three-hour lectures a week for a class with upwards of hundreds of students (hardly personal), they will meet with smaller groups of students (say 20) multiple times a week, where they will get to know and develop meaningful relationships with many students (once university structures permit this). The responsibilities will include building relationships with students, facilitating the building of community among students, helping students network with other students and people in industries and careers in which students are interested...

Full story at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicholasladany/2025/10/03/meet-the-ai-professor-coming-to-a-higher-education-campus-near-you/>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments: 

Labels: miscellaneous

Straws in the Wind - Part 126

From Science: After months of anticipation, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) today released its instructions for the next round of applicants to its Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP). To the dismay of many, the prestigious program, which funds more than 1000 promising STEM graduate students each year, will now exclude a key group of students, as second-year Ph.D. students are no longer eligible. The students who are still able to apply—undergraduates, bachelor’s degree holders, those in joint bachelor’s-master’s programs, and first year Ph.D. students—aren’t in the clear either, as some must decide whether to throw their hats in the ring with an unusually narrow timeframe to apply...

Second-year students who had put in significant work on their applications prior to the solicitation release now feel abandoned. “I had already completed several drafts of my personal statement and research proposal,” says University of Chicago molecular engineering Ph.D. student Ben Broekhuis. After receiving an honorable mention when he applied as an undergraduate, he opted to sit out the application process the first year of his Ph.D. after being advised to wait. “Now, seeing from the solicitation that I’ve been cut out of my opportunity to apply, I’m completely shattered.”



Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 77

Ten Percent

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In House

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There are no publicly available data on what proportion of GRFP applicants, who typically number more than 13,000 per year, are second-year Ph.D. students. But Susan Brennan, a former GRFP director who now works at Stony Brook University, says in her experience the bulk of applications come from people at that stage. "It's completely unconscionable that NSF is pulling the rug out from under these students." She adds that for students coming into graduate school from less well-resourced universities, having an extra year to get publications and other research experiences under the belt can be particularly important...

Full story at <https://www.science.org/content/article/completely-shattered-changes-nsf-s-graduate-student-fellowship-spur-outcry>.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:20 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [politics](#), [public funding](#), [Stony Brook U](#), [U of Chicago](#)

Another Quarterly Reminder



Each quarter, we track the governor's statements on a variety of current issues, sometimes including UC, along with items related to events in that quarter. You can find the third quarter of 2025 at:

<https://archive.org/details/newsom-7-2-2025-arrests-of-immigrants>.

You will find some comments by the governor and others there about UCLA's current conflict with the feds. Pro and con ads regarding Prop 50 began in the third quarter. Many other current topics are also to be found.

Posted by California Policy Issues at [3:10 AM](#) No comments: 

Labels: [governor](#), [politics](#), [UCLA](#)

Thursday, October 9, 2025

Fully Aligned?

In an [LA Times](#) story mainly about USC and its potential response to pressure from the feds, there was also some information about UC, which you might have missed.

From the [LA Times](#): ...In response to a question about the proposal to USC and whether Newsom would issue the same threat of removing state funding to UCLA — the subject of ongoing negotiations over a sprawling U.S. Department of Justice antisemitism investigation — the governor said he was "not concerned" about the UC system... As UCLA continues to negotiate with the Trump administration, Newsom said he has confidence in the university system, whose leaders have been working "collaboratively for weeks" to come to a resolution.

The governor's more tempered remarks were a shift from his comments in August and September, when he said UC should "sue" Trump and should not "bend the knee," a reference to his belief that the deals made by Brown and Columbia universities with the White House were bad moves that empowered the government to target more campuses. "Governor Newsom, [UC] President [James B.] Milliken and the board of regents are **fully aligned** in protecting the values, integrity and unparalleled quality of the University of California system," UC Board of Regents Chair Janet Reilly said [last] Friday in a statement to *The Times* following Newsom's comments.

...While praising UC's handling of federal negotiations, Newsom was less supportive of recent actions by UC Berkeley to release the personal information of 160 employees to Department of Education as part of a federal investigation into alleged campus antisemitism... Newsom said he "requested an independent review" of the data release in order to "make a judgment as to whether or not it was appropriate..."

Full story <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-10-03/newsom-usc-trump-campus-university-compact>.

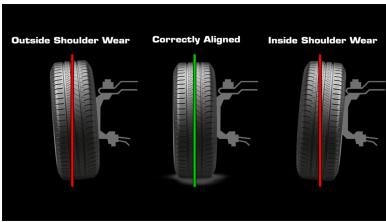
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